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# Illustrations Use as a Factor Influencing Reading Comprehension of Children's Stories among Pupils of Selected Primary Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Oshiotse Andrew Okwilagwe Professor

*University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, [okwilagweandrew@yahoo.com](mailto:okwilagweandrew@yahoo.com)*

Esther Kowho Aghotor Miss

*University of Ibadan, Nigeria*

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# **Illustrations Use as a Factor Influencing Reading Comprehension of Children's Stories among Pupils of Selected Primary Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria**

OKWILAGWE, Oshiotse Andrew, Ph.D

Professor, Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

okwilagweandrew@yahoo.com

AGHOTOR, Kowho Esther

Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

## **Abstract**

This study investigates illustrations use as a factor influencing reading comprehension of children's stories among pupils of selected primary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design of Expost-facto type. The study population consists of 312 primary five and six pupils from which a total of 195 pupils were selected from five private secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria adopting the systematic random sampling technique. The questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. It consists of 64 questions arranged in four sections. Simple percentages, mean, standard deviation and Pearson's Product Moment correlation were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that majority (75.4%) of the respondents often read children's stories with weighted mean ( $\bar{X}=2.60$ ). The study also revealed that the level of reading comprehension of the stories by pupils was high with (81.5%) respondents and a weighted mean ( $\bar{X}=2.50$ ). The findings revealed that (61.0%) of the respondents often regard the appropriateness of the illustrations with weighted mean ( $\bar{X}=2.70$ ) and further revealed that children's stories contain illustrations with weighted mean ( $\bar{X}=2.21$ ). The findings revealed that there was significant relationship between illustrations and reading comprehension. The null hypothesis was, therefore rejected ( $r=0.830^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Based on these findings, it was therefore recommended that good and appropriate illustrations should surface the needs of school pupils. Thus, the illustrator should work closely with the

author and the editor to give children more positive images and uplift them emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually.

**Key words:** Illustrations use, reading comprehension, children's stories, primary school pupils, Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Word Count:** 251

## **Introduction**

Reading is a holistic process, involving a number of mental activities. It extends into the realm of logic, reasoning, interpretation, analysis, creative criticism and mental mastication of the words and sentences which make up a theme. Reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self discovery (Chibamba, 2012). In other words, reading as earlier mentioned involves the reader and the reader's cognitive mapping from the author's point of view and creative evaluation point of view. Reading requires the reader to "be on the go"; thinking, predicting, questioning, evaluating, defining and redefining what is being read (Okwilagwe, 1992).

Reading is a mental process. This means that successful reading relies on an interaction between decoding linguistic visual inputs and accessing phonological information. Reading begins when the reader unlocks the code of a written language system. However, the neuroscience of reading is much more complex than this simplistic view. Reading is an elaborate process that involves decoding of abstract symbols into sounds, then into words that generate meaning. The most important way in which children become successful in school is by learning to read and reading to learn. According to Unoh (1985), reading can be seen as a written communication process, where the reader enters a conversation and meets with the author's thoughts enshrouded in words.

Good readers are faster and more accurate at comprehension of syntactically complex text than poor readers. Individual differences in reading comprehension are likely to be associated with a quantifiable measure of consumption of brain resources during task performance. Reading comprehension can be taught and learnt through the process of teaching of reading and through practice by pupils. According to Okwilagwe (1992), some intrinsic factors affect reading comprehension of pupils. Such factors could be; Brain capacity and/or development, Personality type (conflicted, unconcerned, indolent, diligent, sophisticated,

prejudiced and illiterate); ailments could affect rate of reading comprehension. Such ailments could be (dyslexia, autism, Alzheimer etc). Some pupils, who are poor readers, tend to read word by word, while good readers read strings of words made into sentences. This practice enhances reading comprehension. Meyler (2007) reported a systematic relationship between reading ability defined by word and non-word measures and local brain activity elicited by a sentence comprehension task (pragmatic acceptability, judgements), noting the under activation of three cortical regions (left middle temporal gyrus, the left post central gyrus, and the right inferior parietal lobule) of the brain; during sentence reading by elementary school children (primary 3-6) with poorly developed word-level skills. In dyslexic readers, for instance, the under activated regions overlap during the phonological and semantic word-level reading exercise, suggesting that one or more of these brain regions may contribute to the development of reading comprehension ability at the sentence level. External factors like the reading background of the child, availability of reading materials, socioeconomic status of the child and even the presentation of the information in the available reading materials and so on can constitute factors that may affect reading comprehension by pupils (Okwilagwe, 1992).

Reading comprehension can be enhanced through the use of illustrations. According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, an illustration is "an example that explains or proves something." Thus, an illustration is a graphic depiction of any concept or subject in a drawing, sketch, painting, photograph, cinema or other type of image; it could be a drawing, painting or printed work of art which explains, clarifies, illuminates, visually represents, or merely decorates a written text, which could serve as a literary or commercial product. Illustrations are a successful expression using imagery and the symbolic, the iconic and the conventional; have achieved something that no other literary form has mastered. Book, magazine, newspaper and journals illustrations have in the past been the dominating forms of this type of visual art, although illustrators have tried their hands in other aspects like poster art, advertisements, comic strips, animation, greeting cards and so forth. Illustrations are a link between the text and the reader's comprehension. Illustrations tend to bridge that gap between information encoded in the text and the acquisition of the knowledge intended for the reader by the author of the text.

There are many types of illustrations such as the following: Literary/ Story illustrations (e.g. children's books): These tend to represent pictorial truths. The images depict narrative action of a fantastical or dramatic nature, the accent is on creating a credible point of contact,

Conceptual Illustrations: The images may contain elements of reality, but as a whole take a whole different form, Historical/ Cultural: These are primarily paintings, that focus on areas such as portraits or landscapes where the artist intends to convey something novel; Information graphics/ Technical diagrams: Technical illustrations, which may be educational, is used to visually communicate information of a technical nature. This is an effort to make the point of focus clear to the audience. This could also convey extra information to the readers. These illustrations aim "to generate expressive images that effectively convey certain information via the visual channel to the human observer". Therefore, the images are accurate in terms of dimensions and proportions, and should provide an overall impression of what an object is or does; to enhance the viewer's interest and understanding; Distortion/Abstraction (These illustrations often are far removed from reality and are the figment of the imagination of the illustrator)

All manners of illustrations, whether they are Educational Illustrations (e.g. scientific text), Fantasy games and books illustrations (Book Cover and Jacket Illustrations, Comics); Media illustrations (magazines, periodicals, newspapers, sports papers); Commercial illustrations (poster/indoor and advertising/ outdoor), product packaging); Building Perspectives (Blueprint); and Photographic Illustrations (photographs) play the role of assisting or aiding reading comprehension of the meaning and experience expressed in graphic symbols by the author of the text being read. Thus, in the context of this study, the term, illustration is necessarily used as an element of interpretations and visual explanation of a text, concept or process integrated in storybooks meant for educational purposes of reading to learn and learning to read by pupils in primary schools. Ready examples that can be cited are picture books which combined visual and verbal narratives.

### **Statement of the problem**

Although well illustrated children's books are in high demand in Nigeria, the issues and problems of determining the links of illustrations to text and the pupils readers level of comprehension have not been empirically investigated; thus remains little understood. The importance of literary comprehension of children's stories by primary school pupils is tremendous in the development process of reading to learn by pupils. It is in this process pupils are able to imbibe the needed values and morals which are embedded in the stories. If primary school pupils read and are able to comprehend what they read, they are likely to develop the

qualities that would be useful to them even as adults. Despite the importance of reading comprehension, poor comprehension of information content in literature among pupils has been established in literature as a universally existing phenomenon. Previous studies carried out on some primary school pupils who read children's stories revealed that pupils have low rate of comprehension of reading assignments. This problem could be attributed to poor or lack of illustrations that could aid reading comprehension. Moreso, personal observation by the researchers prior to this study was that there were no appropriately illustrated books for pupils to choose from, in some cases in some children stories, there were no illustrations at all in some stories books read by the school pupils in schools in Ibadan. While in some others, illustrations are presented but do not match or adequately interpret the text. The problem of inadequate and inappropriate illustrations could hinder high level of reading comprehension of pupils. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the extent of influence of illustrations on reading comprehension of children's stories among pupils in primary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the extent primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria read storybooks?
2. determine the level of reading comprehension of the stories by pupils in the selected primary schools in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria?
3. find out the degree of appropriateness of the illustrations in the story books read by primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria?
4. determine the extent the illustrations in children's stories aid reading comprehension of primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria?

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. To what extent do primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria read storybooks?
2. What is the level of reading comprehension of the stories by pupils in the selected primary schools in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria?
3. What is the degree of appropriateness of the illustrations in the story books read by primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria?

4. To what extent do the illustrations in children's stories aid reading comprehension of primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria?

### **Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the use of illustrations and reading comprehension of primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Significance of the study**

The findings of this study provide useful information that would add knowledge to the already existing literature in area of literary comprehension in Nigeria and provide useful information which that contributes to reading comprehension purposes. In addition, it help students learn how to sharpen their comprehension skills and to develop their vocabulary by maintaining interest and broadening knowledge frontiers, rather than merely using books as a source of decoration or entertainment. It will help them learn to become critical thinkers and react to information as they build language and comprehension skills in context. Also, the outcome of this study shed more light on the effects of illustrations on reading comprehension.

### **Literature Review**

Reading has been defined as an active process in which readers shift between sources of information, elaborate meaning and strategies, monitor their comprehension, and use the social context to reflect their response (Walker, 2000). Efficient readers look for what thought lies beneath the printed words. Braam and Sheldon (1959) referred to reading as "the interpretation of reading materials." This according to them means that, "this interpretation is based on the ability of the reader to understand the purpose of the author as well as what the author is saying."

According to Mordi (2016), "Reading is an open gate to the world at large." It takes people to different locations in the world, within the pages of a book. For reading to effectively take place, therefore, the language used must be comprehensible to the reader. Reading is goal bound. The ultimate goal of reading is for children to become sufficiently fluent to understand what they read. This goal determines the way reading is carried out. Reading is more than the ability to mouth words; reading demands that the reader reasons and visualises and interprets signs, ideas and symbols in the presented language. Reading requires the reader to be "on the go" thinking, predicting, questioning, evaluating, defining and redefining what is being read

(Okwilagwe, 1992). Reading, in fact, is the binding agent between the brick of an ignorant pupil and the brick of literacy. Supporting this is Chibamba's (2012) statement, "Young children acquire reading literacy through a variety of activities and experiences within different contexts."

The United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is campaigning tenaciously against illiteracy all around the world. According to an Indian delegate to a UNESCO conference (cited in Unoh, 1985), "Being without reading ability, half the population of the world has no possibility to realize the human rights. They will remain unaware of the opportunities science and technology gives us to fight hunger, poverty and diseases." The war against illiteracy is geared towards the achievement of functional literacy (minimal capacity to read and write) and the improvement of the prospects for socioeconomic development and world peace. The need to deploy effective methods for achieving high level of reading efficiency has variously been emphasised in extant literature. This need is conspicuous in African countries where European languages like English and French are the recognized media of communication within the nations' sector. (Unoh, 1985, Okwilagwe, 1992). Reading and learning in a second language setting adversely affect the level of proficiency in reading at various levels of education in African.

Reading is obviously a part of and plays a vital role in everyday life of the members of a society where reading is highly valued and a habit among its members. Reading habit births reading culture. Okwilagwe (1992), stated that one's reading habits can determine the degree to which the person reads effectively. According to Joubert, Bester, Meyer and Evans (2013), Habitual reading is the foundation of a reading culture. According to Mordi (2016) "reading habit is the greatest gift you can give a child...the child who is read to so early in life is the one who knows how to form the reading habit early". Reading habit in Okwilagwe's (2016) "is the use of reading as a regular activity: it is the cultivation of an attitude and possession of skills that make reading pleasurable, regular and a constant activity." He went further to define reading culture as "a learned compulsive practice of seeking for data, information, knowledge and wisdom through graphic symbols/ written communication for education, entertainment and for being informed for lifelong endeavours."

Illustrations are graphic presentations that explain all or part of the text involved in a book, primarily to explain the texts for easier and better understanding by pupils especially of those items or scenes that are more easily understood by seeing than being orally described



(Ojediran, 2014). In Ojediran's words, "illustrations can be said to be more useful than definitions in giving meanings of words." Adewuyi (2004) supports this by stating that "it is a common saying that what a child hears, he may forget, [but] what he sees; he is likely to [easily understand and] remember." Illustrations present an interpretation of what is being described to the sight of pupils and help to transform reading from being abstract to reality (Ojediran, 2014). According to David Bland cited in Okwilagwe (1991); "...and you, who wish to represent by words the form of man and all the aspects of his membrification, relinquish that idea. For, the more minutely you describe, the more you will confine the mind of the reader, and the more you will keep him from the knowledge of the thing described. And so it is necessary to draw [illustrate] and describe."

Illustrations are not only to sharpen the perception of children and stimulate their imagination but to also increase their sense of observation, their capacity of attention and the connection among facts and values as they aid detailed study of text (Okwilagwe, 1992). Illustrations help the reader make meaning out of the words (letters, symbols and signs). Ojediran (2014), claims that "For many young learners, the pictorial code is a more direct means of communication than the verbal code. Such children will look at the pictures and having fully understood the message; tell the story in their own words. This helps to develop their imagination" In doing this, illustrations help the readers create centres of interest. This means, the readers carve a niche of understanding around the types of stories to read and how to read them. The following statement was reported by Ojediran (2014), "...Human intellectual capacity is extraordinarily diverse, that the varieties of meanings are many, and that the comprehension of a subject profits from more than one perspective and form of representation."

According to Okwilagwe (1991), illustrations created for the purpose of communication and learning must be of high quality. He went further to say that the illustrations must be sharply focused, as opposed to being blurry or being merely photographically reproduced. The illustrations must be purposively presented in a unified arrangement, in order to convey the appropriate message the author is trying to pass across. They must be able to communicate factual, authentic and not misleading impressions as this ruins the entire purpose of interpreting the supposed vague text. This means that the reader must be put into consideration during the creation of illustrations. An illustration must match the reader's ability (imagination, conceptualisation, generalisation and interpretation). Illustrations add flavour to children's

stories. They are signs, symbols, images that interpret the story. They act as breathing space because children do not have the ability of sustained reading due to their restless nature (Igudia, 2014). Using illustrations is another way of telling the story and it is a good compliment to the book. The illustrations appeal very highly to children. The more colours are in illustrations, the more interesting the child finds the text. This is because colours bring illustrations closer to the realities of life to the natural order of things and aid easy interpretation of objects and events.

According to Segun (1998) “Good illustration can contribute to the overall development of the child by stimulating his imagination or oning his perception, developing his potential”. Fang (1996) opined that illustration serves to “expand, explain, interprets, or decorate a written text” and they play specific functions in the following ways: establish setting; Define and develop characters; extend or develop plot; provide a different viewpoint; contribute to textual coherence; and reinforce text.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research method of expost-facto type. The targeted population of this study consists of 312 primary five and six pupils who were selected from five private secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The selected private primary schools were Baptist Nursery and Primary School, Ibadan; University of Ibadan Staff School; Bodija International Primary School, Ibadan; God's Blessing Group of Schools, Yemetu, Ibadan and Francis "M" primary school, Bodija, Ibadan. The purpose of selection of schools was based on the year of foundation, availability of appropriate educational facilities such as good school library, classroom mini-libraries, level of observable appropriate organisational setting of the school and availability of adequate and qualified teachers. The choice and use of primary five and six pupils were based on recognition of level of cognitive attainment and predisposition to participate in the study such as; their self expression, identification and recognition of objects and images, can comprehend the language of learning and demonstrated ability to read text in English Language. The systematic random sampling technique was used to select the pupils for the study. A questionnaire was the instrument for data collection, it consist questions on Illustrations Use as a factor Influencing Reading Comprehension of Children's Stories among pupils of selected primary schools in Ibadan Questionnaire (IRCCS) consisting of two variables to which the participants were asked to tick the options of their choice in two-point Likert rating scale of Often (O) and Never (N) respectively, this was intended to rate the extent primary

school pupils read storybooks, level of reading comprehension, the degree of appropriateness of the illustrations in the story books and extent to which illustrations aid the reading comprehension of the primary school pupils in Ibadan, Oyo State. The questionnaire was pre-tested using 30 pupils in Yinbol College, Ibadan who were no part of the study. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha method. The reliability for the whole questionnaire was 0.89 alpha levels. A total of 195 questionnaires were administered, and were all retrieved making (100.0%) response rate. It was coded and analysed. Data collected were subjected to various statistical analyses using SPSS version 21. Descriptive and inferential statistics were adopted for data analysis. Simple percentages, tables, correlation and regression were used in analysing data.

### Data Analysis

Data were analysed as they related to the specific areas of the study using descriptive and inferential statistics such as simple percentages, frequency distributions and Pearson's Product Moment correlation Analysis.

### Demographic Information of the Respondents

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents base on Demographic Information**

S/N	Variables		Number	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender	Male	95	48.7
		Female	100	51.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.0</b>
2	Age (Years)	6-10 Years	130	66.7
		11 Years and Above	65	33.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.0</b>
3.	Schools	Bodija International school	50	25.6
		God Blessing Kiddies College	35	17.9
		University of Ibadan Staff School	43	22.1
		Fransis M School Bodija	21	10.8
		Baptist N/P School U.I	46	23.6
		<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.0</b>
4.	Class	Pry 5	174	89.2
		Pry 6	21	10.8
		<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.0</b>
5.	Religion	Christianity	160	82.1
		Islam	35	17.9
		<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.0</b>

6	Type of family	Nuclear	153	78.5
		Extended	32	16.4
		Polygamy	10	5.1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 provided information on the demographic characteristics of respondents and findings showed that majority of the pupils that were part of the study consisted of more females 100 (51.3%) than males 95 (48.7%). Results also showed that age range of majority of the pupils 130 (66.7%) were between 6-10 years while 65 (33.3%) expressed that that were 11 years and above. This gives credibility to the study as most of the pupils were those who must have read children's stories from the selected primary schools; 50(25.6%) from Bodija International School, 46 (23.6%) from Baptist Nursery and Primary School University of Ibadan while 43(22.1%) were from University of Ibadan Staff school, and 35(17.9%) were from God Blessing Kiddies College, while 21 (10.8%) were from Francis 'M' School Bodija. Most of the pupils 174(89.2%) were in primary 5 class while 21(10.8%) was in Primary 6 class. The results also showed that Christianity religion has 160 (82.1%) of pupils religion while Islam was 35(17.9%) of the total respondents and the type of family showed that nuclear family was 153(78.5%) of the total respondents, while extended family was 32(16.4%) and polygamy family was 10(5.1%) of the total respondents.

### Research questions

4.1. Research question 1: To what extent do primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria read storybooks?

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents as to the extent to which they read children's storybooks**

S/N	Items	Often (%)	Never (%)	Total	$\bar{X}$	Rank
1	I read storybooks	191(97.9)	4(2.1)	195(100)	2.42	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2	I enjoy reading stories	179(91.8)	16(8.2)	195(100)	2.04	4 <sup>th</sup>
3	I only read when I have a test or examination	67(34.4)	128(65.6)	195(100)	3.36	11
4	I read for a long period of time without a feeling tired.	113(57.9)	82(42.1)	195(100)	2.89	8
5	In between lines, I stop reading for a few moments and rest my eyes by looking at other objects around me	162(83.1)	33(16.9)	195(100)	2.48	6
6	I know that with practice, I can consciously achieve high rate of reading comprehension	190(97.4)	5(2.6)	195(100)	1.67	3 <sup>rd</sup>

7	I consciously read to acquire good knowledge	194(99.5)	1(0.5)	195(100)	1.42	1 <sup>st</sup>
8	I enjoy reading stories and choose a book instead of social media.	175(89.7)	20(10.3)	195(100)	2.14	5
9	I always carry a book to read with me where ever I go	154(79.0)	41(21.0)	195(100)	2.88	7
10	I buy books for myself	66(33.8)	129(66.2)	195(100)	3.49	12
11	Friends and Relations buy books for me	147(75.4)	48(24.6)	195(100)	2.91	9
12	I borrow books from the libraries	121(62.1)	74(37.9)	195(100)	2.98	10
	<b>Average Total</b>	<b>147(75.4)</b>	<b>48(24.6)</b>	<b>195(100)</b>	<b>2.60</b>	
	<b>N=195, Weighted mean=2.60</b>					

Table 2 indicated that out of 195 respondents, 147 (75.4%) of the total respondents indicated that they often read children's stories, while 48 (24.6%) never read story books. Supported with ( $\bar{X}$  =2.60). Meaning that pupils read children's stories as rated in the above table such as consciously read to acquire good knowledge, 194(99.5%); read storybooks a lot, 191(97.9%); know that with practice, they can consciously achieve high rate of reading comprehension, 190(97.4); enjoy reading stories and choose a book instead of social media, 175(89.7); borrow books from the libraries and against buy books for myself, 121(62.1%); only read when they have a test or examination 67(34.4%).

4.2. Research question 2: What is the level of reading comprehension of the stories by pupils in the selected primary schools in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria?

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents as to the level of reading comprehension of the stories in the selected primary schools in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria**

S/N	Items	Often (%)	Never (%)	Total	$\bar{X}$
1	I easily understand stories at a go	188(96.4)	7(3.6)	195(100)	2.51
2	I have difficulty in remembering what I read	121(62.1)	74(37.9)	195(100)	3.12
3	I read for a purpose and I try to keep that purpose in mind as I read.	193(99.0)	2(1.0)	195(100)	2.02
4	I find it easy to keep my mind on the story book before me.	166(85.1)	29(14.9)	195(100)	2.37
5	I feel comfortable and perfectly at ease while reading.	148(75.9)	47(24.1)	195(100)	1.87
6	I read different story books at different speed rates, depending on the content.	167(85.6)	28(14.4)	195(100)	2.54
7	I find it difficult to understand stories that are written in English Language	48(24.6)	147(75.4)	195(100)	3.65
8	I love reading stories in my language because they are easy to understand	149(76.4)	46(23.6)	195(100)	2.60
9	I always read the preface/ introduction of a story book, so I understand what the story is about.	118(60.5)	77(39.5)	195(100)	2.85

10	While reading stories, I ask myself questions about the characters and actions that are not clear to me	166(85.1)	29(14.9)	195(100)	2.57
11	I always try to learn a lesson in every story book I read	188(96.4)	7(3.6)	195(100)	1.62
12	I find books as good companions	172(88.2)	23(11.8)	195(100)	1.99
13	I always understand the main idea in a paragraph	183(93.8)	12(6.2)	195(100)	2.45
14	I always understand the words used in a passage	180(92.3)	15(7.7)	195(100)	2.62
15	I always understand the passages I read	186(95.4)	9(4.6)	195(100)	2.24
	<b>Average Total</b>	<b>159(81.5)</b>	<b>36(18.5)</b>	<b>195(100)</b>	<b>2.50</b>
	<b>N=195, Weighted mean=2.50</b>				<b>2.50</b>

Table 3 reveals that out of 195 respondents, 159 (81.5%) of the total respondents indicated that they often read with high comprehension, while 36(18.5%) never read with high comprehension.

Supported with ( $\bar{X}=2.50$ ). Meaning that pupils understand the stories they read with ranking items above such as read for a purpose and they try to keep that purpose in mind as they read, 193(99.0%); always try to learn a lesson in every story book they read, 188(96.4%); easily understand stories at a go, 188(96.4%); they always understand the passages they read, 186(95.4%); they always understand the main idea in a paragraph, have difficulty in remembering what they read as against, always read the preface/ introduction of a story book, so they understand what the story is about as against find it difficult to understand stories that are written in English Language with negative response and never.

4.3. Research question 3: What is the degree of appropriateness of the illustrations in the story books read by primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria?

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents as to the degree of appropriateness of the illustrations in the story books read in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria**

S/N	Items	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Total	$\bar{X}$
1	The pictures and drawings are not too many	158(91.0)	37(19.0)	195(100)	2.32
2	The pictures and drawings are not clear	96(49.2)	99(50.8)	195(100)	3.06
3	The pictures and drawings are appropriate.	124(63.6)	71(36.4)	195(100)	2.97
4	The pictures and drawings are perfect and proper for the stories.	168(86.2)	27(13.8)	195(100)	2.04
5	The drawings and pictures do not help me understand the stories I read	90(46.2)	105(53.8)	195(100)	3.03
6	Pictures in my storybooks make me afraid	73(37.4)	122(62.6)	195(100)	3.43
7	Pictures distract me from paying attention to the main idea of the stories	75(38.5)	120(61.5)	195(100)	3.25
8	The pictures are not needed because they only repeat the words	86(44.1)	109(55.9)	195(100)	3.06

9	I love to see pictures in my storybooks even at my present age	138(70.8)	57(29.2)	195(100)	2.26
10	Pictures are not necessary to a class of my age	101(51.8)	94(48.2)	195(100)	2.81
11	I love to read books with coloured pictures and drawings.	157(80.5)	38(19.5)	195(100)	1.97
12	I would love to have many pictures/ drawings in my books	158(91.0)	37(19.0)	195(100)	2.08
	<b>Average Total</b>	<b>119(61.0)</b>	<b>76(39.0)</b>	195(100)	<b>2.70</b>
	<b>N=195, Weighted mean=2.70</b>				<b>2.70</b>

Table 4 shows that out of 195 respondents, 119 (61.0%) of the total respondents indicated that they often regard the appropriateness of the illustrations, while 73 (39.0%) never regard the appropriateness of the illustrations in their story books. Supported with ( $\bar{X}=2.70$ ). Meaning the pupils have high perceptions of the appropriateness of the illustrations in the children's stories on the ranking items above such as: the pictures and drawings are perfect and proper for the stories; pictures and drawings are not many; love to have many pictures/ drawings in their story books; they love to read books with coloured pictures and drawings; love to see pictures in their storybooks even at their present age; whether pictures and drawings are too many in their story books and whether the too many pictures in their storybooks make them afraid; Pictures distract them from paying attention to the main idea of the stories; the pictures are not needed because they only repeat the words; the drawings and pictures do not help them understand the stories they read; and whether the drawings are not clear.

4.4. Research question 4: To what extent do the illustrations in children's stories aid reading comprehension of primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria?

**Table 5: Distribution of respondents as to the extent the illustrations in children's stories aid reading comprehension**

S/N	Items	Often(%)	Never(%)	Total	$\bar{X}$
1	I easily understand stories that have familiar pictures and drawings.	193(99.0)	2(1.0)	195(100)	1.60
2	I like to read stories with coloured pictures and drawings	173(88.7)	22(11.3)	195(100)	1.95
3	I enjoy pictures and drawings in stories more than the words	150(76.9)	45(23.1)	195(100)	2.34
4	Pictures/ drawings motivate me to read	169(86.7)	26(13.3)	195(100)	2.04
5	Books with strange pictures and drawings hinder me from understanding the stories	115(59.0)	80(41.0)	195(100)	2.93
6	While reading some stories which I do not understand,	180(92.3)	15(7.7)	195(100)	1.95

	I always wish I could see pictures/ drawings to guide me				
7	Pictures and drawings help me to visualise the stories I read	179(91.8)	16(8.2)	195(100)	1.86
8	Pictures and drawings make stories real to me	153(78.5)	42(21.5)	195(100)	2.08
9	Pictures/ drawings dramatize points that help me understand stories quickly	167(85.6)	28(14.4)	195(100)	2.35
10	Pictures/ drawings help me to retain what I read in my brain	173(88.7)	22(1.3)	195(100)	2.29
11	Pictures/ drawings correct the wrong ideas I have about the lesson(s) in the story	143(73.3)	52(26.7)	195(100)	2.42
12	Pictures help me to recall things that have happened to me in the past	170(87.2)	25(12.8)	195(100)	2.28
13	Pictures help me to fully examine the main ideas in stories	184(94.4)	11(5.6)	195(100)	2.10
14	Pictures and drawings help me to compare and contrast social and cultural values	167(85.6)	28(14.4)	195(100)	2.45
15	Pictures/ drawings enable me to gain new experiences from the stories I read.	175(89.7)	20(10.3)	195(100)	2.24
16	Pictures and drawings help me to raise questions and solve problems	165(84.6)	30(15.4)	195(100)	2.19
17	Pictures and drawings help me to understand why I behave the way I do	163(83.6)	32(16.4)	195(100)	2.42
18	The pictures and drawings in my storybooks help me to prepare for future occurrences	167(85.6)	28(14.4)	195(100)	2.09
19	Pictures and drawings help me to think deeply and analytically	174(89.2)	21(10.8)	195(100)	2.26
20	Pictures and drawings inspire aid to work hard	162(83.1)	33(16.9)	195(100)	2.19
21	Pictures and drawings make the stories shorter and quicker for me to understand	157(80.5)	38(19.5)	195(100)	2.33
22	Illustrations help me to take note of details in my story books	162(83.1)	33(16.9)	195(100)	2.56
23	Illustrations help me to make decisions on the lessons learnt from the stories I read	179(91.8)	16(8.2)	195(100)	2.07
24	Pictures and drawings in my stories help me to imagine objects in other subjects	173(88.7)	22(11.3)	195(100)	2.16
25	Pictures and drawings inspire me to draw and paint	182(93.3)	13(6.7)	195(100)	2.03
	<b>Average Total</b>	<b>160(82.1)</b>	<b>35(17.9)</b>	<b>195(100)</b>	<b>2.21</b>
	<b>N=195, Weighted mean=2.21</b>				<b>2.21</b>

Table 5 indicates that out of 195 respondents, 160 (82.1%) of the total respondents indicated their children's story books contain illustrations, while 35 (17.9%) stated that their books do not



contain illustrations. Supported with ( $\bar{X}=2.21$ ). Among the major areas where illustrations aid the reading comprehension of primary school pupils with ranking items above are: easily understand stories that have familiar pictures and drawings; pictures help in examining the main ideas in stories; pictures and drawings inspire aid to draw and paint; pictures and drawings in stories help to imagine objects in other subjects and reading some stories which they do not understand.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the use of illustrations and reading comprehension of primary school pupils in Ibadan Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Table 6: Correlation between illustration and reading comprehension**

Variables	Mean	S.D	N	Df	R	P	Remark
Reading comprehension	36.28	12.09	195	192	.830**	.000	Sig.
Illustration	37.79	11.98					

\* Correlation Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 6 revealed that there was significant influence between illustrations and reading comprehension. That is, Reading comprehension has correlates with Illustration in the children stories ( $r=0.830$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), since  $P$  was lesser than 0.05 level of significance, therefore, hypothesis one was rejected, there was a significant effect of illustration on reading comprehension among pupils of selected primary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### Discussion of findings

The study was designed to examine Illustrations Use as a Factor Influencing Reading Comprehension of Children's Stories among Pupils of Selected Primary Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. From the study, it could be inferred that the selected primary schools under consideration have more female pupils 100(51.3%) than the male counterparts and there is also strong indications that the selected primary schools have more pupils 174(89.2%) in primary 5 than pupils in primary 6 and majority 130(66.7%) of the pupils age ranges from 6-10 years. It could be deduced that majority 160(82.1%) of the pupils were Christianity and also majority 153(78.5%) were from nuclear family.

Findings revealed that pupils often read children's stories, such as consciously read to

acquire good knowledge, read storybooks a lot, know that with practice, they can consciously achieve high rate of reading comprehension, enjoy reading stories and choose a book instead of social media, borrow books from the libraries and only read when they have a test or examination. This was in line with the finding of Mordi (2016) who asserts that "Reading is cure for boredom for a child of any age. It keeps them out of mischief too." Apart from this, it serves an academic purpose. "Reading is a very important skill which does not only facilitate enjoyment but is also a necessity for learning in school" (Chibamba, 2012).

Findings also revealed that pupils often read with high comprehension. Meaning that pupils understand the stories they read with ranking items such as read for a purpose and they try to keep that purpose in mind as they read, always try to learn a lesson in every story book they read, easily understand stories at a go, they always understand the passages they read and they always understand the main idea in a paragraph. This result agreed with the findings of Braam and Sheldon (1959), who indicated that "Reading is not only a rapid recognition of verbal symbols but also an understanding of the thoughts and ideas for which they stand. According to Joubert, et al (2013), Habitual reading is the foundation of a reading culture. "Reading habit is the greatest gift you can give a child...the child who is read to so early in life is the one who knows how to form the reading habit early" (Mordi, 2016). Reading habit in Okwilagwe's (2016) words "is the use of reading as a regular activity: it is the cultivation of an attitude and possession of skill that make reading pleasurable, regular and constant activity." He went further to define reading culture as "a learned compulsive practice of seeking for data, information, knowledge and wisdom through graphic symbols/ written communication for education, entertainment and for being informed for lifelong endeavours.

Findings revealed that pupils often regard the appropriateness of the illustrations. Meaning the pupils have high perceptions of the appropriateness of the illustrations in the children's stories on the ranking items such as: the pictures and drawings are perfect and proper for the stories; pictures and drawings are not many; love to have many pictures/ drawings in their story books; they love to read books with coloured pictures and drawings and love to see pictures in their storybooks even at their present age. This result corroborates Ojediran (2014) that illustrations are graphic presentations that explain all or part of the text involved in a book, primarily to explain the texts for easier and better understanding by pupils especially of those items or scenes that are more easily understood by visually than being verbally described. In Ojediran's words,

"illustrations can be said to be more useful than definitions in giving meanings of words." Adewuyi et al (2004) supports this by stating that "it is a common saying that what a child hears, he may forget, (but) what he sees; he is likely to (easily understand and) remember." Illustrations present an interpretation of what is being described to the sight of pupils and help to transform reading from an abstract to a real point (Ojediran, 2014). Segun (1988) noted that the sensitivity to the visual stimuli on the part of the child has led to the publication of folding books even for babies.

Findings further revealed that children's story books contain illustrations. Among the major areas where illustrations aid the reading comprehension of primary school pupils are: easily understand stories that have familiar pictures and drawings; pictures help in examining the main ideas in stories; pictures and drawings inspire aid to draw and paint; pictures and drawings in stories help to imagine objects in other subjects and reading some stories which they do not understand. This result supported the findings of Igudia (2014) that illustrations add flavour to children's stories. They are signs, symbols, images that interpret the story. They act as breathing space because children do not have the ability of sustained reading because of their restless nature (Igudia, 2014). Using illustrations is another way of telling the story and it is a good compliment to the book. The more colours there are in the illustrations, the more interesting the child finds it. In fact, the younger the child the more appealing the illustrations are. Illustrations are powerful interpretation devices in children's stories. They facilitate pupils' reading comprehension. However, the presence of illustrations alone may not be adequate to aid reading comprehension by pupils in primary schools.

Findings revealed that there was a significant influence between illustrations and reading comprehension. That is, Reading comprehension has correlates with Illustration in the children stories. This result commensurate with the findings of Okwilagwe (1992), that illustrations are not just to sharpen the perception of children and stimulate their imagination but to also increase their sense of observation, their capacity of attention and the connection among facts and values as they aid detailed study of text. Illustrations help the reader make meaning out of the words (letters, symbols and signs). Segun (1988) and Ojediran (2014), claims that "For many young learners, the pictorial code is a more direct means of communication than the verbal code".

## **Conclusion**

It is evident from the result of this study that illustrations significantly influence reading comprehension of children's stories among pupils of the selected primary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The ability to read is acknowledged to be the most stable and durable of the second language modalities. Reading is said to be “complete” only when the reader understands the message that the author places within the pages of a book. Reading comprehension is the thorough understanding of a text and its elements of presentation with illustrations. The children’s stories are usually written at a level that permits the children to gain at least a fair understanding of what they are reading without external help. The appropriate use of illustrations influences the reading comprehension of children’s stories by primary school pupils in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. Segun (1988) affirms that children will look at the pictures and tell the story in their own words. This helps to develop their imagination. Thus the transmission of a message is not the privilege of written language alone. Pictorial language is literature in its own right...pre-school children and beginning readers, these children understand the language and the message better when there are many pictures. Illustrations accentuate the cognitive function of young readers and aid their level of comprehension of texts.

### **Recommendations**

Reading and reading comprehension is a cognitive psychologistic “guessing game”. Therefore, good and appropriate illustrations should surface the needs of school pupils. Thus, the illustrator should work closely with the author and the editor to give children more positive images and uplift them emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. This observation is deemed necessary because extant literature indicates that:

Too many Nigerian artists give illustration unimaginative treatment. Having imbibed stereotypes, such ideas themselves, they perpetuate these stereotypes in their illustrations.

In this setting of professional practise, the illustrators should handle and treat illustrations as literature in their own right, whether used by themselves or integrated with written texts. They should provide illustrations that would aid interpretation of the text for high level of comprehension by school pupils. Nevertheless, care must be taken in considering when, how and what type of illustrations to use, as noted by Chall, 1967/83, Elster (1995) and cited by Fang (1996) “...illustrations pictures may distract children’s attention from point, thus hindering their identification and acquisition of written language” and thereby negatively affect reading comprehension by school pupils. However, Fang (1996) “The excitement of a good book is the

constant tension between the moments isolated by the pictures and the flow of words that join these moments together”.

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